

## MEETING FOR BUSINESS.

APRIL 25, 1843.

VICE PRESIDENT MORTON in the Chair.

The Monthly Report of the Corresponding Secretary was read and adopted.

The Committee, consisting of Prof. Johnson, Mr. Haldeman, and Mr. Peale, to whom was referred, in November, 1842, a communication from Peter A. Browne, Esq., accompanying some specimens of an earthy matter from Lancaster county, Pennsylvania, supposed to be identical with Terra di Sienna, made a report, which was adopted. The report stated that after a careful investigation of the subject, and comparisons in several modes with the genuine article, the Committee had formed the following conclusions:

"That the earth in question is a hydrated silicate of Alumina tinged with variable proportions of peroxide of iron; 8.17 grs. of one of the best samples having been calcined at redness for twenty minutes in a platinum capsule, left 6.74 grs. of dark brown fragments, showing a loss of 17.5 per cent. of water"—"and that for certain minor purposes in the arts, this coloring matter may be highly useful, but as a general substitute for Terra di Sienna, it cannot be expected to gain the approbation of artists."

The Committee, consisting of Mr. Cassin, Mr. Haldeman, and Mr. Phillips, to whom was referred Mr. William Gambel's\* paper, entitled "Descriptions of some new and rare Birds of the Rocky Mountains and California," reported in favor of its publication, with the exception of the generic and specific characters of the *Eudromus variegatus* of that paper, which they deem it expedient to defer until the receipt of the specimen.

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\* This gentleman has just completed the tour of the Rocky Mountains and California, at the instance of Mr. Nuttall, to whom this paper was originally addressed, and by him referred to the Academy for Publication.

*Picus\* Nuttallii.*

Male, varied with black and white; back transversely banded with black and white; upper part of the head black with linear white spots; hind head with a broad red stripe; sides of the head and neck black, with a wide stripe running from the base of the bill about the length of the head, also white stripes running from the eyes and uniting on the back of the neck, which is black. Rump and two middle tail-feathers black. Wing-feathers on their outer and inner webs, with six or seven bands of white spots; all the wing coverts also with white spots; tips of some of the tertiaries light brown. Beneath white, with a slight tinge of yellow; sides and vent with dark brown spots; lower tail coverts and tail-feathers, except the two middle ones, white, with irregular bands or spots of dark brown; throat and breast white; second quill shorter than the seventh; third, fourth, and fifth nearly equal. Two white tufts of hair-like feathers at the base of the upper mandible. Irides red. Length seven inches.

This pretty species I shot in a willow thicket near the Pueblo de los Angeles, Upper California, December 10th. It was actively engaged pecking into one of the trees; from time to time uttering a singular note, unlike any I have heard from a woodpecker. It is, perhaps, a common species in the summer time.

*PARUS\* montanus.*

Male.—Head, upper part of the back, throat, and upper part of the breast pure black; two white stripes commence on the front and extend over the head about the length of it, leaving a black band in the centre and a stripe running over each eye to the nape; cheeks and shoulders white. Wings and tail brownish-gray; beneath whitish; tinged with brown on the sides and vent. Legs bluish. Length a little over five inches. Tail two and a half inches.

This new and distinct species we first observed about a-day's journey from Santa Fe, in New Mexico, and from thence in all the ranges of the Rocky Mountains nearly to California. Its manners and notes are very much like those of the common Chickadee, but the latter are more weak and varied. It keeps also much in low bushes, where from morning to night, with untiring patience and activity, it may be seen hopping from bush to bush, searching them minutely for small insects. It also frequently descends to the ground to pick up small seeds; when thus occupied it occasionally stops, looks around and utters a slender tē dē dē dē, then altering to dē dē dāit, flies off to some other bush. On the Rio Colorado it keeps much in the cotton wood trees which grow along its banks, and its notes, which became familiar, were almost the only ones heard in the winter, when

we were there, to cheer our course. This species is sometimes seen in company with the *P. minutus*, Town., and *Regulus calendula*, which at this time are roving in large and busy flocks along the small streams. It is probably found also in the mountains of California.

FRINGILLA *Blandingiana*.†

Male.—Above olive green tinged with cinereous and brown. Crown rufous red; front, line over the eye, ears, and breast cinereous; throat pure white; a white line also running from the base of the lower mandible to the neck, below which is a line of blackish tipped with cinereous. Sides brownish; belly and vent white; wings and tail brown; wing coverts, margins of the primaries and secondaries and tail feathers, especially near the base, bright yellowish green; tail beneath pale green. Length six and a quarter inches. Feet and legs stout, brown; tarsus and middle toe, with the nail, seven-eighths of an inch in length; hind toe nail longer than the toe; bill above dark brown, beneath paler.

Of this new and singularly marked species I procured a single specimen only, in September, on the bank of a small stream in the Rocky Mountains, about half way between New Mexico and the Colorado of the west. It kept in low bushes in company with the *F. guttata*, Nutt., and *F. graminea*, occasionally uttering a single chip. The throat and breast of this species very much resemble those of the *F. Pennsylvanica*.

LOPHORTYX\* *Gambelii*, Nutt.

Cinereous-brown above; head bright rufous; crest of six black feathers one and three-fourths inches long, wide at the tips and curving forwards; throat black, banded by a line of white; front of long grayish and black bristly feathers, with a band of white across them near their tips, which extends over the eye to the back of the head; feathers of the neck and upper part of the back small, cinereous, each with a central streak of dark rufous; upper part of the breast and shoulders cinereous; lower part of the breast cream colored; middle of the belly black; flanks dark rufous; each feather with a large lanceolate central spot of pure white; tertiaries edged on their upper margins with yellowish white; tail rounded, cinereous blue; under coverts with dark brown spots. Length a little over ten inches. Wings four and a half; fourth quill longest; second and seventh equal. Bill black. Feet and legs dull bluish. Tarsus one and a quarter inches. Tail four and a half.

We met with small flocks of this handsome species some distance west of California, in the month of November, inhabiting the most

† In honour of Wm. Blanding, M.D., of Philadelphia.

barren brushy plains, covered with a species of *Chenopodium*. Here, where a person would suppose it to be impossible for any animal to subsist, they were seen running about in small flocks of five or six, occasionally uttering a low guttural call of recognition, sometimes of several notes, very different from that of the common species. When flying they utter a loud sharp whistle, and conspicuously display the long crest.

*LANIUS elegans*. White winged Shrike, Swains.

This species, of which but a single specimen is known to Ornithologists, I found abundant in California, in the brushy plains, and sometimes in the hedges near the towns; it flies close to and frequently alights on the ground and on low weeds; when flying, its white banded wings can be seen very distinctly; in the adults the breast is pure white; in the young blended with dark brown, like our common species, except the throat and vent, which are white; sometimes, when disturbed, it has a harsh crying note like a jay, pāy pāy pāy.

*SCIURUS tenuirostris?* Swains. Synopsis Birds of Mexico?

Above olive brown; beneath tawny yellow; sides of the throat, with the breast and sides, marked with irregular streaks and spots of dark brown; a yellowish white line over the eye; throat, belly, and vent without spots. Wings and tail blackish brown, the feathers margined with yellowish white; two outer tail-feathers almost wholly white; the second merely tipped with the same. Length six inches; tarsus seven-eighths of an inch; hind toe nail as long as the toe. Bill slender; half an inch in length.

We met with this species only on the Rio Colorado; at that time (October) keeping in small flocks along the bank of the river, sometimes wading in the water to pick up whatever they might find in the mud, with which their bills were covered. When sitting they jerked their tails in the manner of the *S. noveboraceus*, which they somewhat resemble; they also uttered, when flying, a few slender notes.

Swainson questions the *S. tenuirostris* being found on the table land. This species, I should think, was not, from its habits, although I saw a few specimens among some sage bushes (*Artemisia*) near the river.

*PTILOGONYS Townsendii*, Aud., Nutt.

This rare and singular bird, of which but a single specimen has been obtained in Oregon, I first met with, in October, on the banks of a small, rocky creek, in the Rocky mountains, between the Rio Colorado and California. Here, in the depth of solitude, it was flying along the stream, alighting on the rocks, and jerking its tail in a lively

manner, feeding solely on buffalo berries (*Shepherdia*) which grew plentifully along its banks, and with which its stomach was crammed. We afterwards found it on one of the highest and most desolate mountains, near a small pool of water, to which, towards evening, various kinds of birds came to drink, and among them two individuals of this species, which I killed; but these, like the specimen procured by Mr. Townsend, were females, as are all the specimens I have obtained. It appeared to have somewhat the manner of a fly-catcher, and I never heard it utter a note.

*Turdus nanus*, Aud., Nutt.

This small and, I think, perfectly distinct species, we saw frequently in the Rocky mountains, frequenting low solitary places, and keeping much on the ground. In California, and also near the Pueblo de los Angeles, in January, I have seen several specimens in the willow hedges and brushy places in company with the sparrows. Though it resembles, in general appearance, the *T. solitarius*, it may easily be distinguished by its smaller size, never exceeding six inches in length.

*Fringilla Gambelii*, Nutt., Man. of Ornith.\*

This species, procured in Oregon by my friend Mr. Townsend, was very common on the road from near New Mexico to California, where it is also seen in almost every hedge in company with *F. leucophrys*, to which it is closely allied, if not the same species.

*Erythropsiza frontalis*, Bonap.

In California this species is extremely abundant at the time we were there (January), keeping in small flocks in the neighborhood of the towns, and frequently in the gardens in company with various species of sparrows. It has much the habit of *E. purpurea*, but is more familiar. In Santa Fe, in New Mexico, it builds its nest under the portals of the houses in the public square, and alights familiarly about the doors; in July they had fledged young. They also appeared here to have a partiality for meat, which is frequently hung up in the sheds, eating it greedily whenever they had an opportunity. In California, also, I have observed them examining the sheds and portals, perhaps for places suitable for building their nests.

#### DEFERRED BUSINESS.

The Society then proceeded to the consideration of two Resolutions offered at previous meetings, to alter Article I., Chapter III., of the By-Laws, reducing the amount of the

initiation fee from \$10 to \$5; and Article 3d of same Chapter, reducing the amount required to constitute a Life Membership from \$80 to \$50—both of which were adopted.

#### NEW BUSINESS.

Dr. Morton stated that he had deposited in the Academy a large number of valuable letters and papers which had been placed in his hands by General Parker, Administrator to the Estate of the late Zaccheus Collins, embracing the Botanical Correspondence of the latter with Muhlenberg, Baldwin, Elliott, Bigelow, Schweinitz, Nuttall, and other American Naturalists; whereupon a resolution was adopted instructing the Botanical Committee to collate and arrange these manuscripts and have them bound and placed in the Library of the Academy.

#### ELECTION.

Robert Kilvington, of Philadelphia county, was elected a Member of the Academy.